

TEXT OF TELEGRAM 83ISLAMAO05657

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R 310439Z MAR 83
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2702
AMEMBASSY ROME

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ISLAMABAD 05657

STATE FOR RP AND NEA

AID FOR AID/FFP AND ASIA/PNS

ROME FOR FODAG

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: SREF, AF, WFP, IR

SUBJECT: WFP MISSION STUDIES ESTABLISHMENT OF FOOD AID
PROGRAM IN IRAN

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 5378 (B) ROME 3593 (C) ISLAMABAD
2685

1. (C) ENTIRE TEXT.
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2. SUMMARY. A THREE-MAN WFP/FAO TEAM VISITED IRAN,
MARCH 3-14, TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A
FOOD AID PROGRAM THERE.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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DISCUSSED IN SOME DETAIL THE REPORT THE TEAM IS

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SUBMITTING TO WFP/ROME. THE TEAM SPENT FIVE DAYS IN TEHRAN AND FIVE IN THE ZAHEDAN-MESHED AREA IN EASTERN IRAN. A

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END SUMMARY.

3. THE WFP/FAO MISSION COMPRISED TEAM LEADER YVES CLARET (FRANCE; ASSISTANT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WFP IN ISLAM-ABAD), RICARDO CUEVA RAP (ECUADOR; WFP EMERGENCY AID OFFICER), AND JOSE GONGORA (SPAIN; FAO NUTRITION EXPERT). INITIALLY THE TEAM WAS DELAYED 2-3 WEEKS IN LEAVING FOR IRAN BECAUSE DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY DISAGREED ON GRANTING THEM VISAS. THE TEAM FLEW FROM GENEVA TO TEHRAN ON MARCH 3 AND RETURNED DIRECTLY TO ROME VIA IRANAIR ON MARCH 14. THEY DIVIDED THEIR TIME IN IRAN EVENLY BETWEEN TEHRAN AND EASTERN IRAN. FROM

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TEHRAN THEY FLEW TO ZAHEDAN, WHERE THEY VISITED THE BORDER TOWN OF MIRJAVEH, THEN PROCEEDED BY VEHICLE TO ZABOL, BIRJAND AND MESHED. THE TEAM VISITED A BORDER CONTROL POINT AT MIRJAVEH WHERE THEY SAW A LARGE NUMBER OF NEW ARRIVALS (REFUGEES) FROM THE HAZARAJAT. THE TEAM ALSO VISITED A CONTROL POST AT BIRJAND. THE LATTER, ALTHOUGH NOT ON THE FRONTIER, ACTS AS THE CONTROL POINT FOR THE LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES COMING ACROSS THE OPEN BORDER FROM WESTERN AFGHANISTAN. TO ITS SURPRISE THE TEAM SAW REFUGEES ARRIVING "BY THE HUNDREDS" IN BIRJAND. THE TEAM FLEW BACK TO TEHRAN FROM MESHED.

4. ONCE THE TEAM GOT TO IRAN THEY FOUND IRANIAN AUTHORITIES IN GENERAL FACILITATED THEIR MISSION. THE TEAM HAD TWO ESCORTS, A GOI MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OFFICIAL WHO SPOKE NOTHING BUT PERSIAN AND HELPED LITTLE, AND A FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL WHO SPOKE FLUENT FRENCH AND WAS VERY HELPFUL. NEVERTHELESS THE TEAM DETECTED SOME AMBIVALENCE TOWARD A UN ROLE IN ASSISTING IRAN, AND NOTED THAT ABBAS AKHUNDI, DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, CRITICIZED THE UN ON FEBRUARY 28 FOR ITS "FAILURE TO ACT UPON ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IN GIVING IRAN FACILITIES" TO HELP THE AFGHAN REFUGEES (REPORTED IN THE NEWSPAPER "KAYHAN", MARCH 1, 1983).

5. AFGHANS IN IRAN: WORKERS AND "REFUGEES". ALTHOUGH

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THE GOI TOLD THE MISSION THERE ARE 1.5 MILLION AFGHAN REFUGEES IN IRAN. THE MISSION FOUND IT DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO GET A FIRM FIGURE ON THE NUMBER OF AFGHANS. BOTH REFUGEES AND OTHERS. IN IRAN. THEY WERE INFORMED THAT PRIOR TO 1978 BETWEEN 180,000 AND 250,000 AFGHAN AGRICULTURAL LABORERS AND BETWEEN 300,000 AND 500,000 AFGHAN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS HAD "SETTLED" IN EASTERN

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USIE-00 SP-02 SR-06 SNP-01 PRS-01 /108 W
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R 310439Z MAR 83
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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AMEMBASSY ROME
INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL
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IRAN. MOST OF THESE AFGHANS WERE WITHOUT THEIR FAMILIES,
BUT FOLLOWING THE SOVIET INVASION, THEY BROUGHT THEIR
FAMILIES TO IRAN. THE REFUGEES ENTERING IRAN AFTER THE
INVASION CAME WITH THEIR FAMILIES. THE MISSION OB-
SERVED THAT THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN AFGHAN REFUGEES
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AND THOSE WHO CAME EARLIER AS LABORERS IS INCREASINGLY
BLURRED.

6. COUNCILS FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES; REGISTRATION. THE
GOI HAS ESTABLISHED COUNCILS FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES IN
CITIES AND TOWNS WHERE THERE ARE APPRECIABLE NUMBERS OF
AFGHAN REFUGEES TO DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF THE REFUGEE
SITUATION. THE HEADS OF THE AFGHAN REFUGEE COUNCILS IN
MESHERD AND ZAHEDAN IMPRESSED THE TEAM BY THEIR COMPETENCE.

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THE KHORASAN COUNCIL IN MESHED IS HEADED BY A U.S.-TRAINED STATISTICIAN. THE COUNCILS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HITHERTO VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION OF THE REFUGEES. AS OF MARCH 12, 1983, THE GOI, EAGER TO KEEP CLOSER TABS ON REFUGEES AND ALSO TO IMPRESS THE WFP/FAO TEAM WITH ITS RESOLVE TO GET A HANDLE ON THE SITUATION, MADE REGISTRATION COMPULSORY. AFGHANS ARE NOW BEING ISSUED NEW IDENTITY CARDS. THE KHORASAN COUNCIL FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES HAD REGISTERED OVER 300,000 REFUGEES PRIOR TO THE TEAM'S VISIT, AND BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE AT PRESENT 800,000 AFGHAN REFUGEES IN THAT PROVINCE ALONE.

7. REFUGEE CAMPS. THE GOI KEEPS SEVERAL THOUSAND OF THE REFUGEES IN CAMPS OR DETENTION CENTERS KNOWN AS "QUARANTINE STATIONS" AND "TRANSIT CAMPS", BUT THIS IS A RELATIVELY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THEIR TOTAL NUMBER. (COMMENT: THESE COULD WELL BE THE "PRISON CAMPS" REFERRED TO RECENTLY BY A WEST GERMAN JOURNALIST HERE (SEE PARA 6 REF A). END COMMENT). THE CAMPS ARE A FINANCIAL BURDEN AND A DRAIN ON AMENITIES AND SERVICES, AND PRESENT LAW AND ORDER AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS. THE MISSION FELT THAT THE LAW AND ORDER PROBLEMS ARE DUE IN LARGE PART TO THE PREJUDICE OF THE IRANIANS AGAINST AFGHANS IN THEIR MIDST, IN SPITE OF THE EXHORTATIONS OF AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI TO THE CONTRARY. CONFIDENTIAL
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THERE IS A HIGH INCIDENCE OF TB, MALARIA AND VD IN THE CAMPS. MOST STAFF IN THE CAMPS ARE AFGHANS. THE TEAM BELIEVES THERE ARE 3 OPERATIONAL TRANSIT (REFUGEE) CAMPS, ONE OR TWO MORE THAT ARE ALMOST COMPLETED, AND TEN OTHERS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. THE TEAM DID NOT GET A CLEAR IDEA OF WHERE THE CAMPS ARE EXCEPT FOR THE ONE FOR A FEW THOUSAND REFUGEES THEY SAW NEAR BIRJAND. THEY BELIEVE THE OTHERS ARE IN EASTERN IRAN. THE TEAM CONFIRMED THAT THERE ARE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF AFGHANS IN BANDAR ABBAS. REFUGEES OUTSIDE THE CAMPS CAN MOVE AROUND WITH RELATIVE EASE. THE TEAM CONCLUDED.

8. WHERE ARE THE REFUGEES FROM? ALTHOUGH THE REFUGEES COME FROM VIRTUALLY ALL PARTS OF AFGHANISTAN, MOST ARE FROM THE PERSIAN-SPEAKING AREAS. IN BIRJAND THE TEAM OBSERVED A LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES ARRIVING FROM HERAT, KANDAHAR AND MAZAR-E SHARIF. THE NUMBER OF PATHAN REFUGEES IN IRAN IS RELATIVELY SMALL AS MOST OF THE RURAL PATHANS SEEKING REFUGE HAVE GONE TO PAKISTAN. THE TEAM NOTED HOWEVER THAT URBAN PATHANS FROM KANDAHAR CITY CAN BE FOUND IN SOME NUMBERS IN IRAN. THERE ARE MANY SHIA HAZARAS AMONG THE REFUGEES.

9. REFUGEE GROUPINGS. THE GOI HELD A 3-DAY SEMINAR ON AFGHAN REFUGEES IN TEHRAN IN EARLY MARCH. GOI DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR AKHUNDI, ADDRESSING THE SEMINAR

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(AS REPORTED IN "KAYHAN" MARCH 2) SAID THAT REFUGEE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES WOULD ONLY BE ALLOWED "IF THE REFUGEES DO NOT ADHERE TO ANY IDEOLOGY INSPIRED FROM EAST OR WEST". AKHUNDI MADE IT CLEAR THAT ONLY FUNDAMENTALIST GROUPS WOULD ENJOY THE SUPPORT OF IRAN'S CLERICAL LEADERS. ON MARCH 13 TEHRAN TIMES QUOTED HOJAT AL-ISLAM NAQAVI OF THE "UNITED FRONT OF THE ISLAMIC

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R 310439Z MAR 83
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AMEMBASSY ROME
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"REVOLUTION OF AFGHANISTAN" IN IRAN IN DENOUNCING THE
POSTURE ON AFGHANISTAN OF THE RECENT NAM CONFERENCE IN
NEW DELHI. ONE AFGHAN REFUGEE GROUPING THAT THE TEAM
HEARD MENTIONED A NUMBER OF TIMES IN IRAN IS THE "JAMIYAT-
E ESLAMI" (NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH OTHER IDENTICALLY-
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NAMED GROUPS*). THIS PARTICULAR JAMIYAT IS MADE UP OF
FUNDAMENTALIST SHIA MULLAHS AND IS ACTIVE BOTH IN IRAN
AMONG THE AFGHAN HAZARA REFUGEES AND IN AFGHANISTAN WHERE
ITS MULLAH MEMBERS ARE TRYING TO GET FRENCH DOCTORS
EXPELLED FROM THE HAZARAJAT.

10. ATMOSPHERICS. THE WFP/FAO TEAM OBSERVED THAT THERE
IS MORE AUTHORITY IN THE PROVINCES OF IRAN THAN AT THE
CENTER. A RESULT OF THE DISORGANIZATION OF CENTRAL

AUTHORITY AND NOT, IN ITS OPINION, REPRESENTING A GROWTH OF SEPARATISM. THE TEAM NOTED THAT YOUTHS WITH GUNS ARE UNIVERSALLY FEARED IN IRAN. IN TEHRAN THE TEAM SPENT AN INORDINATE AMOUNT OF TIME WAITING FOR APPOINTMENTS AND WAITING FOR TRAFFIC TO MOVE. THE LATTER WAS SO CHAOTIC AND SLOW THAT UPON HIS RETURN TO ROME THE TRAFFIC SEEMED A MODEL OF DISCIPLINE AND EASE.

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15. KABUL MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. SPIERS

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